

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 078799
ORIGIN SS-25

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TO AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE
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AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 078799

EXDIS - CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PARM, SF

SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR PROBLEM

REF: (A) LAGOS 3789, (B) USUN 1064, (C) STATE 77914

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF BRIEFING PAPER AND TALKING POINTS
WHICH DEPARTMENT HAS PREPARED FOR THE PRESIDENT'S USE IN
LAGOS. SEPTEL CONTAINS ADDITIONAL BRIEFING MATERIAL ON
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SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 078799

WHICH AMBASSADOR MAY DRAW FOR ANY MORE DETAILED FOLLOW-UP
PRESENTATION TO FMG.

US OBJECTIVE: TO OBTAIN PRESIDENT OBASANJO'S AGREEMENT
TO DEFER NIGERIA'S SEEKING EARLY UN SECURITY COUNCIL CON-
SIDERATION OF A TOTAL EMBARGO ON PEACEFUL NUCLEAR
COOPERATION WITH SOUTH AFRICA.

NIGERIAN OBJECTIVE: TO CAPITALIZE IN THE UN ON CURRENT STRONG FEELING AMONG AFRICAN STATES THAT SOME FORM OF SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION MUST BE TAKEN TO INCREASE PRESSURES ON SOUTH AFRICA.

BACKGROUND

WE ARE INFORMED THAT NIGERIA AND POSSIBLY OTHER AFRICAN STATES, WITH AT LEAST IMPLICIT SUPPORT FROM THE SOVIET

BLOC, INTEND TO SEEK A SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS CALLING ON ALL STATES TO CEASE NUCLEAR COOPERATION WITH SOUTH AFRICA. WE ARE AT A DELICATE STAGE IN EXPLORATORY DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT LOOKING TOWARD ITS EARLY ADHERENCE TO THE NPT AND ACCEPTANCE OF SAFEGUARDS ON ALL ITS NUCLEAR FACILITIES, INCLUDING AN ENRICHMENT PLANT THAT IS PROBABLY CAPABLE OF PRODUCING WEAPONS-GRADE MATERIAL. OUR ONLY DIRECT LEVERAGE IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS IS OUR WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE SUPPLYING FUEL FOR SOUTH AFRICA'S RESEARCH AND POWER REACTORS IF SOUTH AFRICA MEETS THE ABOVE CONDITIONS. WE WOULD THEREFORE EITHER HAVE TO OPPOSE AN ANTI-SOUTH AFRICAN RESOLUTION ON THE NUCLEAR ISSUE OR TO ACQUIESCE IN IT AT COST OF ABANDONING OUR NONPROLIFERATION STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES IN SOUTH AFRICA.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 078799

WE ARE PREPARED TO BRIEF THE NIGERIANS MORE EXTENSIVELY ON OUR RECENT EFFORTS AND DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SOUTH AFRICANS BUT IT IS AMBASSADOR EASUM'S JUDGMENT THAT THE NIGERIANS ARE UNLIKELY TO APPRECIATE THE NUANCES OF PEACEFUL VERSUS MILITARY APPLICATIONS OF NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY. HE AND AMBASSADOR LEONARD (USUN) RECOMMEND THAT YOU RAISE THE SUBJECT PERSONALLY AND THAT YOUR APPROACH SIMPLY POINT OUT THAT OUR ONLY CHANCE TO PREVENT SOUTH AFRICA FROM OPTING FOR A NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROGRAM IS TO KEEP IT TIED TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONTROL SYSTEM THROUGH LIMITED NUCLEAR COOPERATION, AND THAT A UN DECISION TO CUT OFF SUCH COOPERATION WOULD SPELL CERTAIN DEFEAT FOR OUR CURRENT EFFORT.

THE FRENCH HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERN TO US ABOUT NIGERIAN PRESSURE IN THE UN FOR SANCTIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA; FRENCH INTEREST IN HEADING OFF SUCH A RESOLUTION STEMS IN LARGE MEASURE FROM ITS RECENT SALE OF TWO NUCLEAR POWER REACTORS TO SOUTH AFRICA. WE ARE PLANNING TO ASK THE FRENCH TO USE THEIR INFLUENCE WITH THE FRENCH-SPEAKING AFRICAN STATES IN THE UN AS REINFORCEMENT FOR OUR APPROACH

TO THE NIGERIANS.

TALKING POINTS

-- RECALL SOUTH AFRICA'S ASSURANCES OF LAST AUGUST THAT IT DOES NOT INTEND TO DEVELOP OR TEST NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVES FOR ANY PURPOSE.

-- RECALL OUR REQUEST THAT SOUTH AFRICA BACK UP THESE ASSURANCES BY ADHERING TO THE NPT AND ACCEPTING INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDS ON ALL ITS NUCLEAR FACILITIES.

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PAGE 04 STATE 078799

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY REGAIN CONFIDENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA'S PEACEFUL NUCLEAR INTENTIONS.

-- NOTE THAT SOUTH AFRICA'S ONLY INCENTIVE FOR TAKING THESE ACTIONS IS THE PROSPECT OF LIMITED OUTSIDE SUPPORT FOR ITS PEACEFUL NUCLEAR PROGRAM.

-- IF THERE IS AN EMBARGO, WE LOSE OUR INFLUENCE OVER NUCLEAR DECISIONS; THAT MAY DRIVE SOUTH AFRICA TOWARDS A NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROGRAM.

-- WE ARE AT A DELICATE POINT IN THE TALKS WE HAVE BEEN HAVING WITH THE SOUTH AFRICANS TO GET THEM TO INSTITUTE FULL-SCOPE CONTROLS. (AMBASSADOR EASUM CAN PROVIDE FOLLOW-UP BRIEFING IF DESIRED).

-- WE NEED TIME TO SEE WHETHER A SOLUTION IS POSSIBLE, AND WE BELIEVE WE SHARE A COMMON INTEREST IN AVOIDING ANY MOVE IN THE UN AT THIS TIME THAT WOULD ELIMINATE OUR LEVERAGE.

-- WE DO NOT RULE OUT RECOURSE TO THE UN IF RESOLUTION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR PROBLEM THROUGH NEGOTIATION PROVES IMPOSSIBLE.

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